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THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE REVOLT OF PESCENNIUS NIGER.

By G. A. HARRER, University of North Carolina.

During the past six years the problem of the chronology of Niger's revolt in Syria has been studied in detail in three separate works. My own appeared in the United States in 1915, a book by Platnauer in England in 1918, and a work by Hasebroek in Germany in 1921.¹ Due to poor means of communication during the war, Platnauer did not see my study, and Hasebroek saw neither Platnauer's nor mine. Since the appearance of his book Platnauer has also published a short paper in *The Journal of Roman Studies*,² taking issue emphatically with my views. This paper, too, escaped Hasebroek's attention. The three studies independently produced are not in harmony. They agree very well on the beginning of the revolt, but differ concerning its course, and concerning the date of its end. Since my own view does not now coincide with either of the other two, but has been modified by both of them, it has seemed worth while to examine them carefully, to study again the available evidence, and, with what new evidence can be brought to bear, to suggest a solution of the problem.

In order to make clear the most important variations in these studies, it may be well to state briefly their conclusions. Platnauer adheres to the 'traditional' view that Niger's revolt began in the spring of 193, but that all the serious fighting took place in 194, and that the final battle, which was shortly followed by the death of Niger, was fought in 'the late autumn or early winter of the year 194.'³ Hasebroek would have the revolt begin in the spring of 193, with much of the serious fighting also in 193, and the final battle at Issus late in September, followed by Niger's death in October, 194.⁴ My own view was that the revolt was put down by Severus before the close of the year 193.⁵

Platnauer, in his paper, has very pointedly given his criticisms of my view, and of the new evidence which I advanced to support it. It is necessary to examine these criticisms, for if they are valid, they prove my former view entirely incorrect, and Hasebroek's largely so. The criticism to which Platnauer attaches the most

¹ G. A. Harrer, *Studies in the History of the Roman Province of Syria*, Princeton University Press, 1915. (It is cited as *Syria* in this article.) Maurice Platnauer, *The Life and Reign of the Emperor Lucius Septimius Severus*, Oxford University Press, 1918. Johannes Hasebroek, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Kaisers Septimius Severus*, Heidelberg, 1921.

² Maurice Platnauer, *On the Defeat of C. Pescennius Niger at Issus*, in vol. viii (1918), pp. 146-153.

³ Platnauer's book pp. 78 ff. and 91; his paper p. 146.

⁴ Hasebroek pp. 20, 52, 56, 58, 61.

⁵ *Syria* pp. 42 and 78 ff. All three studies are in substantial agreement in placing the beginning of Niger's revolt in April, 193, during the rule of Didius Julianus. *Syria* pp. 83 and 84; Platnauer's book p. 61; Hasebroek pp. 20 and 21.

importance is that my view does not allow sufficient time for Severus with his army to march from Rome, fight in Asia Minor, and defeat Niger at Issus by the end of 193.¹ He proves by the evidence of the *Codex*, the sole new bit of evidence that he advances, that Severus was in Rome as late as June 27. Granting that Severus started for the East on July 1, he claims that I allow only 184 days for the whole campaign, making it necessary for Severus's troops to have covered some 2,160 miles at nearly 12 miles a day—an undertaking which he considers quite impossible.

And yet, by Platnauer's own figures, Severus, at the beginning of the civil war, marched from Carnuntum to Rome, 800 miles, in 49 days, an average of over 16 miles per day. In his book (pp. 60-61) the figures given would indicate a march of 40 days at 20 miles per day. Hasebroek's evidence on this detail is good, and comes to about the same conclusion.² He notes that Severus arrived at Interamna, some 683 Roman miles from Carnuntum, by June 1. Believing also that the revolt began on April 13, and allowing about two weeks for mobilisation, he concludes that Severus covered the distance in about 34 days, at a rate of 20 Roman miles a day. These figures seem, according to the evidence, substantially correct; but, on any showing, Severus's army must have marched for considerably over a month at an average of considerably more than 12 miles a day.

Still better evidence for long marches is available. In the year 69, Mucianus, to support Vespasian's revolt, starting some time in July, marched from Syria with an army of about 20,000 men, on the way used part of his force to fight the Dacians, and arrived at Rome, between December 22 and January 1, that is, in less than six months.³ He must have taken almost precisely the same route that Severus followed, in the opposite direction; and he made the march in less time than Platnauer thinks possible. This evidence alone destroys the value of Platnauer's criticism.⁴

There is another argument which will invalidate the proofs advanced by Platnauer. He plainly considers that the battles in Asia Minor were fought after Severus's arrival with his army from Rome.⁵ My view, in his opinion, involves both the long marching and, besides, all the fighting, in a period of about six months. Whether or not Severus and his force from Rome were present at the engagements in Asia Minor was not discussed in my study. The

¹ Platnauer's paper pp. 152 and 153.

² Hasebroek p. 18.

³ Tacitus, *Historiae* ii, 81 and 83; iii, 46; iv, 11 and 38. H. Stuart Jones, *The Roman Empire* p. 94.

⁴ There is some inconsistency between Platnauer's paper and his book (p. 80) where he states that if Niger had 'begun his march on Rome when Septimius began his, he should have reached the borders of Italy some time during Septimius's thirty days in Rome.' According to this suggestion

Niger could have marched some 1,600 miles in 110 days, from April 13 to July 31, the latest possible date for Severus's departure from Rome, at an average of 14 miles a day. Again in his book (p. 105) Platnauer states that Severus marched back from Nisibis to Vindonissa, in 196, between July 1 and December 1, a rate of at least 12 miles a day for about 150 days. In his paper he does not correct or refer to these statements.

⁵ Platnauer's paper p. 152; book pp. 85 and 86.

evidence is against Platnauer's view. In the *Vita Severi* it is stated that Aemilianus, Niger's *legatus*, was defeated *a Severi ducibus*, and then again that Niger in person was defeated *ab isdem ducibus*: *his auditis ad Senatum Severus quasi confectis rebus litteras misit*.¹ Dio Cassius also has it that leaders of Severus won these great battles.² Herodian, it is true, gives the impression that troops brought by Severus had part in the fighting; but he nowhere states that Severus brought these troops all the way from Rome.³

There is more evidence. Soon after the revolts of Severus and of Niger began, Severus had supporting him toward the East at least the provinces, and their armies, from the borders of Italy to Thrace; Niger, from Byzantium to Egypt. Behind Niger was a total force of nine legions and perhaps 50,000 auxiliaries, while Severus in the region mentioned had ten legions and 61,000 auxiliaries.⁴ Suppose that Severus led a large army to seize the government at Rome; yet he still had readily available, in the Balkans and vicinity, forces adequate to prosecute war. Suppose that he did not learn of Niger's revolt until he arrived at Rome; yet he could send orders to these forces toward the East to move on Asia Minor.

And that is exactly what he seems to have done. We are told that Tiberius Claudius Candidus commanded for Severus in Asia Minor as *dux exercitus Illyrici expeditione Asiana*. Into this position he plainly stepped, according to his *cursus honorum*, from that of *logista civitatis splendidissimae Nicomedensium item Ephesiorum*.⁵ Is it not reasonable to think that he was selected because he was on the spot and immediately available? Again, L. Fabius Cilo, governor of Galatia, was made *praepositus vexillationibus Perinthis pergentibus*,⁶ and so evidently commanded against Niger in the first battle of the war, at Perinthus in Thrace. Finally we know that L. Marius Maximus, while *legatus legionis I Italicae*, was made *dux exercitus Mysiaci apud Byzantium*⁷; that is to say, he was in charge of the siege of Byzantium, which began early in the war. *Legio I Italica* at this time had its regular station at Novae,⁸ in Moesia Inferior, 300 miles from Byzantium—evidently the force nearest at hand for the siege was employed. The selection of these three leaders, the only men named for the first phases of the struggle, all of whom were in the East at the time, points to measures hastily arranged and quickly carried out by men on the spot, before Severus's

¹ *Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Vita Severi* 8 and 9.

² Dio Cassius lxxv, 6 and 7.

³ Herodian iii, 2.

⁴ Domaszewski, *Die Rangordnung des römischen Heeres* p. 179; Cheesman, *The Auxilia of the Roman Army* p. 145 ff.; Platnauer's book pp. 62 and 79.

⁵ *C.I.L.* ii, 4114; Pauly-Wissowa iii, 2691; Dio Cassius lxxv, 6.

⁶ *C.I.L.* vi, 1408; *Vita Severi* 8, 13; Stout, *Governors of Moesia* p. 33. It is possible that an inscription (*C.I.L.* iii, 10, 398) *Fortunae Aug. sacrum*, set up by city officials of Aquincum, Pannonia Inferior, on September 11, 193, refers to the battle of Perinthus.

⁷ *C.I.L.* vi, 1450.

⁸ Platnauer's book p. 71.

arrival. Only at the last battle of the war, at Issus in Syria, is there found a leader of Severus who is known to have come from a different section of the empire—Anullinus, from the province of Africa.

The literary evidence, though not very complete, is in agreement with the interpretation of events based on the inscriptions. In the first place, before going to Rome, Severus had of course made sure of his control of the Balkans—*firmatis, quas post tergum relinquebat, provinciis Romam iter contendit*.¹ Later the reader of the *Vita* is informed that Severus, before leaving Rome, *miserat sane legionem, quae Graeciam Thraciamque praeciperet, ne eas Pescennius occuparet, sed iam Byzantium Niger tenebat*.² Dio has nothing on the point; but Herodian, while emphasising the general preparations, states that Severus at Rome ordered the remainder of the force of Illyricum to proceed to Thrace and meet him there.³

Suppose, however, that it be admitted that Severus had arrived on the scene before the two great battles in Asia Minor, it seems clear that adequate forces were at his disposal without the army he led from Rome. If there were not time for that army to make the long march and to fight, it might be that Severus preceded it and ordered action by the forces at hand in Thrace, knowing that the army from Rome was on the way. Possibly that force took no part except at the battle of Issus, which was fought considerably later, and only after Niger's troops had held back their enemies' advance for some time at the Cilician Gates.⁴ Herodian several times mentions the speed of the advance from Rome, though, it is true, he says that Severus was with his army.⁵ These various considerations make it impossible to give any weight to Platnauer's emphasis on the question of the length of time necessary for the revolt to run its course.

Platnauer also criticises deductions made in my study from the evidence of papyri, and in the case of one important papyrus his suggestion should be adopted, and may here be proved good by additional study of the document. It is a tax-receipt dated September 17 in the year 3 of Septimius Severus, that is, according to the usual reckoning, 194. So the editors have dated it,⁶ and I followed them in my study.⁷ Platnauer objects to this dating, and proposes as a solution that there is an error of a year in the papyrus, or that the reckoning should be from the first year of Severus, August 29, 193 to August 28, 194. A modification of this latter idea is acceptable. That is, since Severus finally won control over Egypt early in 194,⁸ his first year may have been counted from

¹ *Vita Severi* 5, 3. With this Dio Cassius is in agreement, lxxiv, 15.

² *Op. cit.* 8, 12.

³ Herodian ii, 14.

⁴ *Syria* p. 85.

⁵ Herodian ii, 14 and 15; iii, 2. As suggested

above, Severus may have arrived in Asia Minor with the force ordered to meet him in Thrace.

⁶ *Berliner griechische Urkunden* i, 199, line 20 ff.

⁷ *Syria* pp. 79 and 81.

⁸ Hasebroek p. 58; *Syria* pp. 79 and 80.

that date in this papyrus, and his second would begin with August 29, 194. At any rate, the papyrus must now be dated in 195, not only because of the appearance of the imperial titles *Arabicus Adiabenicus*, to which Platnauer calls attention, but also from that of the name *Pius* along with them in the same document.¹ The name is only known otherwise in the year 195 and later, and, in fact, this document, dated now in 195, will give its earliest datable appearance. Since the evidence of this papyrus was used as the chief support of my view that the end of Niger's revolt was early, near the end of 193, and was to be associated with Severus's assumption of the title *Imperator III*, that view must now be given up.

In order to explain some other difficulties in the evidence of the papyri Platnauer concludes that Egypt was divided in its allegiance, part favouring Niger, and part Severus. This position is untenable. The earliest papyrus of the reign of Severus, whose evidence is patently valid, is dated February 21, 194.² Platnauer would oppose to this a papyrus of Niger's rule, dated by him in March, 194.³ But he is here in error. The date of it is December 9, 193, the latest date found for Niger's rule in Egypt. At the end of this papyrus is another date in Phamenoth (March), which Platnauer uses; but no emperor's name is attached to this date, and no one can possibly be sure that reference is there made to Niger's reign. It has the appearance on the papyrus of a later addition. The editors of it think so too.⁴

There is one papyrus dated, with no indication of the month, in the first year of Severus⁵; but it cannot disturb the overwhelming evidence of other papyri and of coins which show Niger lord of Egypt in 193. The best explanation of its date is that it is reckoned from the time when Severus was finally recognised in Egypt, early in 194.⁶ Platnauer would use it as an indication of a divided Egypt; but it comes from the Fayum, and from the same district comes the latest papyrus of Niger, which has been studied above. Other and earlier papyri of Niger belong to Oxyrhynchus, some sixty miles to the South.⁷ The sole point that Platnauer might here make is the possibility that Severus was recognised in Egypt very early in his revolt, and Niger a little later. There is here hardly a proof of a divided Egypt. And what other proof is there?

¹ It may be worth while noting also that in the body of the papyrus a date, July-August, 195, is mentioned, though this is not the date of the papyrus.

² *B.g.U.* i, 326, col. 2, l. 12; *Syria* p. 79. Hasebroek, pp. 58 and 59, reasonably suggests, on the basis of *B.g.U.* ii, 362, February 13 as the exact time when Egypt recognised Severus.

³ Platnauer's paper p. 149; Grenfell, *Greek Papyri* ii, p. 95, no. 60. This papyrus is the same as, or an ancient duplicate of, *Brit. Mus. Gk. Pap.* iii, 704, though Platnauer cites them as different.

⁴ Their alternative explanation, that the year 194 was the *annus vagus*, in which Phamenoth began in January, evidently is not correct, for in the papyrus of Severus, mentioned above, 9 *Kal. Mart.* is the Roman date given as the equivalent of *Μεχαιρ κς'* 5, and both refer to February 21 of a regular year.

⁵ *Brit. Mus. Gk. Pap.* ii, 345; Platnauer's paper p. 149; *Syria* p. 84, note 61, incorrectly referred to this as no. 351, as Platnauer has noticed.

⁶ *Syria* p. 85, note 61.

⁷ *Oxy. Papyri* iv, 719 and 801.

Platnauer suggests the presence in Egypt of a vexillatio of the *legio III Augusta* supporting Severus. There is not a scintilla of evidence for it. In support of it, however, Platnauer¹ refers to the *Vita Severi* viii, 7; but a fair reading of the passage, and of a corresponding passage in the *Vita Nigri* v, 4, shows only that Severus hoped to hold Roman Africa against Niger, who held Egypt. The coins show that Alexandria,² and therefore that the *legio II Traiana*, recognised Niger. The papyri show Niger as ruler of Egypt over a period of at least six months.³ Perhaps it may be worth while mentioning that, according to an anecdote preserved in Suidas, on a gateway of Alexandria was cut the inscription, 'The City of the Lord Niger.'⁴ All these perfectly consistent kinds of evidence are not to be weakened by difficulties in the dates of one or two papyri, especially as the difficulties admit of reasonable explanations. The conclusion stands that from some time before June 14, 193 to some time between December 5, 193 and February 21, 194, Niger was in control of Egypt.⁵ The bearing of this on the history of the general course of the revolt will be discussed later.

A fair reading of much of Platnauer's⁶ criticisms with reference to the evidence drawn from inscriptions shows that he is arguing from silence. The fact that in Severus's titles *Consul II* and *Imperator III* are always found together does not prove that *Imp. III* was only assumed with *Cos. II*, that is, in 194; but it does prove that *Imp. III* was not assumed later. It carries no argument against a date late in 193, or very early in 194, if there is evidence in favour of such a date. That *Imp. II* is also known only in 194, supposing that the evidence for the early dating of *Imp. III* is correct, proves that it too was assumed late in 193, or very early in 194, that is to say, that very probably the occasion of its assumption took place not long before the event in consequence of which *Imp. III* was assumed. The fact that *Imp. II* is not found on inscriptions at all bears out this point.

In this connexion the one inscription of vital importance is a military diploma, dated January 31, 194, giving Severus' *Trib. Pot. II*, *Imp. III*, *Cos. II*.⁷ Since it has been concluded above that *Imp. III* does not mark the final victory over Niger, its date has no immediate bearing on that event; but Platnauer does not allow it to apply at all. He terms it an 'admittedly very puzzling diploma' which 'must rather unsatisfactorily be taken as a forgery or a mistake.' It cannot be so readily set aside. Military diplomas, because of

¹ Platnauer's book p. 62, note 1; paper p. 150.

² Hasebroek pp. 155 and 156.

³ *Syria* p. 84, note 61 and references.

⁴ Hasebroek p. 123.

⁵ *Syria* pp. 79, 80, 83, 84; Hasebroek pp. 58 and 59.

⁶ Platnauer's paper pp. 150 and 151.

⁷ *L'Année Épig.* 1908, 146, taken from *Archeografo Triestino* iv (1908), p. 289 ff. in which it was originally published. The day, given as *A.D. Kal. Febr.*, may possibly be not January 31, for no numeral is used; but it must be between January 14 and February 1, if, as the editors suggest, the lack of the numeral may indicate that *A.D.* is superfluous.

their legal significance, are generally accurate. Both the inner and outer copies of this particular diploma have been preserved, and, as given in the original publication, both show the same names and titles of Severus. There is no reason to doubt its genuineness or its accuracy. An important principle in the evaluating of inscriptional evidence is here involved. It is simply impossible, without absolutely certain proof to the contrary, to refuse to accept the accuracy of a legal document of this sort, both copies of which agree in their wording.

The date of this diploma is later in the month than usual for the discharge of the veterans of the four city cohorts, with which it deals. The regular day is known to have been January 7.¹ If an explanation of the later date is necessary, it may be found in the circumstances. Severus may have determined not to discharge veterans while the issue in Asia Minor was still in doubt. Then, when Niger was driven back into Syria, Severus may have sent on word to the city authorising the discharge of troops. It is known from the *Vita* that, after the decisive victory in Asia Minor, Severus sent a report to the senate *quasi confectis rebus*. If this be the true situation, a proper inference is that the date of the diploma presents approximately the time when the news of the victory arrived at Rome. This explanation, however, need not be insisted on, though it is reasonable. In any case, since the diploma dates not later than February 1, and it would take about a month for news to reach Rome from Asia Minor, the victory for which the third Imperatorship was assumed must have been won around New Year's day of 194.² It cannot have been much before, since all the coins showing *Imp. II* are also of 194, proving that the earlier victory was won not long before the victory celebrated by *Imp. III*.

The victory for which Severus was hailed *Imp. III* was no doubt that of Nicea, by which Asia Minor was won. Platnauer³ and Hasebroek⁴ independently agree on this point, and the evidence is favourable to the view. The two battles of vital importance in Asia Minor were fought near Cyzicus and near Nicea. In the first of them Aemilianus, Niger's general, was killed, and in the second Niger was badly defeated. A fair reading of Dio Cassius, Herodian, and the *Vita Severi*,⁵ with a glance at the map showing Cyzicus and Nicea both in the north-west of Asia Minor, gives the impression that those battles were fought within a short time, and the numismatic and epigraphic evidence has indicated the same. Moreover, since the fourth salutation is to be associated with the final victory of the war, the third naturally belongs to the battle near Nicea.

¹ Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* no. 2007, 2010, 2097.

² Hasebroek, p. 58, is in agreement with this dating.

³ Platnauer's book p. 87.

⁴ Hasebroek p. 58.

⁵ Dio Cassius lxxv, 6; Herodian iii, 2; *Vita Severi* 8 and 9.

The battle which won Asia Minor for Severus took place, then, around New Year's day of 194. In absolute harmony with this conclusion is the evidence of the papyri and of an inscription from Egypt. The inscription,¹ an official discharge of veterans of the *legio II Traiana*, shows Severus in control of Egypt with the same names and titles as those of the military diploma of Rome, in particular, *Trib. Pot. II, Imp. III, Cos. II*. According to the papyri, as has been shown, Severus had won control in Egypt by February 21, 194. The conclusion seems inevitable that the governor of Egypt, Mantennius Sabinus, luke-warm in support of Niger as he apparently was, since he was kept in his position by Severus,² jumped to Severus' party at the first feasible opportunity, which evidently came with Niger's loss of Asia Minor. This was a time of revolt against Niger. From Ulpian³ and from Herodian⁴ it is clear that Tyre, Laodicea, and Heliopolis revolted in Syria after Niger's loss of Asia Minor, and that Niger put down the revolt with a heavy hand. It is quite probable that the governor of Arabia, Severianus Maximus, also revolted at this time. Severus must have had some good reason for confirming him in his position after the final defeat of Niger.⁵

It remains to discuss the time of the decisive battle of Issus, for which Severus assumed the fourth Imperatorship. Platnauer⁶ and Hasebroek⁷ agree in associating the two, and on the question of the dating of the event they come to conclusions somewhat similar, but supported by different kinds of evidence. Platnauer's sole proof for a date in 'the late autumn or early winter of the year 194' is that 'the second, third, and fourth imperial salutations all belong to this year.'⁸ This evidence, now valueless because the second and third salutations belong to the very first month of the year or to the last of 193, was supported in some earlier studies by Herodian's statement about a heavy fall of snow and rain at the time of the struggle in the Cilician Gates⁹ through which Severus' troops had to force a passage on their way to Syria. Liebenam¹⁰ dated *Imp. IIII* as late as November, 194, on the evidence of an inscription in which it appeared with *Trib. Pot. III*; but in the face of many other inscriptions combining *Trib. Pot. II* and *Imp. IIII* his evidence carries no weight at all.¹¹

¹ *C.I.L.* iii, 6580.

² *Syria* p. 84. It may be noted that Sabinus is not known as governor of Egypt after April 21, 194. He was succeeded by Ulpian Primianus, who is found in office in Severus' third year, that is, August 29, 194-195. It is then possible that Severus removed Sabinus as soon as he could arrange it; but since Sabinus was surely in office over a year, his removal might have been due to the fact that he had served a term of average length. For the list of governors of Egypt see J. Lesquier, *L'Armée romaine d'Égypte*, Cairo, 1918, p. 515.

³ *Digest* 1, 15, 1.

⁴ Herodian iii, 3, 3 ff.

⁵ *Syria* p. 84.

⁶ Platnauer's book p. 32.

⁷ Hasebroek p. 61.

⁸ Platnauer's book p. 91. His paper adds nothing on this point.

⁹ *Syria* p. 78, note 1, and p. 85.

¹⁰ *Fasti Consulares Imperii Romani* p. 109.

¹¹ *Syria* p. 80.

That some little time must have elapsed between the victory of Nicea, about New Year's day of 194, and the final victory at Issus over Niger is certain. The chief proofs are four. The distance, as the crow flies, from Nicea to Issus is over 400 miles, which could hardly be covered in less than three weeks. But the time must have been longer, for Herodian explicitly indicates that the forces of Severus were delayed at the Cilician Gates.¹ This period of time must not be over-estimated, however, for if Severus had been very seriously delayed, he could have sent troops by other routes, for example through Cappadocia into Commagene and Syria. Again, it must have taken Niger some time to enroll and equip a new force, and to put down the revolts in Tyre and other cities, as he did.² Finally the existence of several inscriptions containing *Severus Imp. III*,³ in contrast with the total lack of inscriptions showing *Imp. II*, is perhaps a fair indication of the lapse of considerable time before the assumption of *Imp. IIII*. This evidence would justify the dating of Niger's final overthrow possibly three months after the defeat at Nicea. No evidence in Platnauer or earlier studies could gainsay this conclusion.

But Hasebroek produces two new bits of evidence which require notice. Either of them, if acceptable, would prove a date fairly late in 194. He states that Severus cannot have followed his army through Asia Minor until after April 4, 194, because that day, the birthday of Caracalla, he celebrated at Perinthus in Thrace.⁴ This statement he supports only by a reference to Domaszewski, who used Jordanes, *Getica* 84. The birthday celebrated happens to have been not that of Caracalla, but that of Geta, the younger son, as is made clear in the *Vita Maximinorum Duorum* 2, which Jordanes used at second hand.⁵ Jordanes names neither the son, whose birthday was then celebrated, nor the time, nor the exact place. He does, however, locate it in Thrace, as does the *Vita*. It is of course necessary to date this event, if that is possible. Severus was in the East twice during his reign. He cannot have been in Thrace in the spring on his second journey, for on the way out in 197 there was no time to return to Rome, after Albinus's defeat in Gaul, to make his arrangements, and to get as far as Thrace by May 27, the birthday of Geta. On the trip back to Rome, during this second journey, he is known to have reached Sirmium in Pannonia Inferior by March.⁶ It remains then to date the event during the campaign

¹ Herodian iii, 3, 6 ff.

² See above, and Herodian iii, 3, 3 ff.

³ The two inscriptions studied above, one of Rome and one of Egypt; also a new one from Spain, *L'Année Épig.* 1919, 88.

⁴ Hasebroek p. 62. That Issus was fought in 194 at some time is evident from the course of events. Hasebroek, p. 154, cites coins of Niger as *Cos. ii*, which must be dated in 194. It may

also be noted that Cornelius Anullinus, who commanded for Severus at Issus, was Severus's proconsul of Africa in 193. *C.I.L.* viii, 1170; Dio Cassius lxxv. 7.

⁵ C. C. Mierow's edition of Jordanes pp. 32 and 74.

⁶ For dates and references see Hasebroek pp. 104, 111, and 127.

against Niger, or during the return after Niger's death and after the first war against Parthia. Nothing in the available literary sources decides this question one way or the other.

The sole objection to dating the celebration at the time of the return arises from the statement of Dio Cassius that Severus in Mesopotamia heard of the fall of Byzantium, and that Byzantium had been besieged for three full years.¹ If the siege began in the late spring or summer of 193, it would then have ended in spring or summer of 196, and hence Severus in Mesopotamia could not have been in Thrace on May 27, 196. But Dio's statement may be an exaggeration or a round number. Hasebroek has given some evidence to show that Byzantium fell before the summer of 196.² And he has proved that Severus was, on the way back to Rome, at Viminacium, Moesia Superior, where he appointed Caracalla Caesar, before August 29 of that year.³ This last fact rather lends support to the dating of the celebration of Geta's birthday on the return from the East. There are a few other indications to the same effect. It does not seem probable that Severus, after Niger's loss of Asia Minor at the battle of Nicea about January 1, 194, would be waiting in Thrace five months later. It was not in the nature of Severus to delay. There is no other evidence, only this story of the birthday celebration, to indicate that he did delay. And that he was in Syria soon after the final battle at Issus is certainly suggested in Dio and Herodian.⁴ This fact would oppose any suggestion that the army may have gone on while Severus remained in Thrace. Again, it is not likely that Severus, after appointing his possible rival, Albinus, Caesar and consul for 194, would arouse distrust by public celebration of a son's birthday with military games. But on the return, when Severus was making plans against Albinus, such a celebration would have been very fitting. It was on his return in 196 that he made his older son, Caracalla, Caesar.⁵ It may be worth mentioning also that Geta, seven years old in 196, had passed out of the stage of *infantia* into that of those *infantia maiores*.⁶ This occasion may have induced Severus to hold public celebration. It seems then better to date the incident in May of 196, though the proof is not conclusive.

Relying on Domaszewski,⁷ Hasebroek produces evidence from Eutropius to date the death of Niger in October, 194.⁸ The passage in Eutropius⁹ has it that Severus died at York *admodum senex imperii anno sexto decimo mense tertio*. Domaszewski admits, as he must, an error in the year according to this reckoning; but he claims that the month was counted from Niger's death, which

¹ Dio Cassius lxxv, 12 and 14.

² Hasebroek p. 80.

³ Hasebroek pp. 86 and 87.

⁴ Dio Cassius lxxv, 8; Herodian iii, 4.

⁵ Hasebroek p. 87.

⁶ *Digest* xxiii, 1, 14; xxvi, 7, 1. Quintilian i, 1, 14.

⁷ Heidelberg. *Sitzungsberichte* (1918), 13, 96.

⁸ Hasebroek p. 61.

⁹ Eutropius viii, 19, 1.

therefore took place in October, for Severus died in February. Now it may be that there is here an error in the manuscript tradition; but, granting the accuracy of the text, it is to be noted that February may be counted the third month from December by Roman calculation, and that, if there is any sort of accuracy in Eutropius's statement, the reckoning may well be from the beginning of the new year of the *Tribunicia Potestas*, December 10, by which the years of the reigns of Roman Emperors were regularly calculated. There is no indication at all that Eutropius was counting from Niger's death; Domaszewski has simply asserted it to explain the *mense tertio*. He remarks also that reigns were sometimes counted from the death of a rival. In this instance, however, when it is certain that Severus won control and was recognised by the senate at Rome, the capital, about June 1, 193,¹ many months before Niger fell, it is unlikely that a historian would disregard the official reckoning and date from an event which after all turned out to be only an incident in Severus's long reign. Moreover Eutropius, in book viii, 17, knows that it was Julianus who lost his throne at Rome to Severus, and so plainly marks the beginning of Severus's rule.

Hasebroek finally states that in any case the defeat of Niger belongs to the autumn of 194, and to support this view he contents himself with a reference to a paper by Kubitschek.² The proof, in that paper, for the late date depends on the passage of Herodian³ which tells of a heavy fall of snow and rain at the Cilician Gates where Niger's forces were holding Severus at bay. It was a good proof when it was thought that the battles represented by *Imp. II* and *Imp. III* were fought in the latter part of the year 194; but now that it is known that they were fought by about January 1, 194, the statement of Herodian may as well refer to the late winter, or the spring of 194. As to certain coins cited by Kubitschek, they rather point to an early end of the revolt, and will be discussed a little later.

There is then no proof for a late dating of the end of Niger's revolt in 194. Hasebroek would have some nine months between the time when Niger was so decisively beaten in Asia Minor and the final battle. This seems unlikely. It is more likely that Severus, with Asia Minor completely in his power, with cities of Syria revolting from Niger, with Egypt certainly, and possibly Arabia, coming to his side, would have pressed home his advantage as soon as possible.

¹ Hasebroek p. 40; Platnauer's book p. 65. Herodian's statement (iii, 15, 3) that Severus ruled 18 years is correct, if the count is according to the years of his *Tribunicia Potestas*. The *Vita Nigri* (5, 1) gives the same number as Herodian. The *Vita Severi* (19, 1) states that Severus died in the eighteenth year of his rule, which is correct if full years are counted from June 1, 193. Dio

Cassius (lxxvii, 15 and 17) has it that he died on February 4, and ruled 17 years, 8 months, and 3 days. Aurelius Victor (*De Caesaribus* xx, 27, and *Epitome* xx, 1) is in agreement with the *Vita Severi*. Plainly none of these calculations were made with reference to Niger's death.

² *Numismatische Zeitschrift* (1909), pp. 22 and 23.

³ Herodian iii, 3, 6.

There are other indications favouring an early date in 194. Herodian, in the passage discussed above, tells that Niger's earth-works in the pass of the Cilician Gates were washed away by the storm. Platnauer thinks that this is drawing the long bow.¹ But, as a matter of fact, a tributary of the Cydnus river flows directly through the pass, which is only a narrow gorge. Heavy rains are customary in this region in the winter season. To quote the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 'The Cydnus is liable to floods'² 'In winter and spring they (rivers rising in Mt. Taurus) bring down large bodies of water.'³ Herodian's story then is reasonable, and would be dated reasonably in the early spring of 194. Suppose it to have been in March, then the battle of Issus may have been fought in the same month or in April. Issus is less than 100 miles from the Cilician Gates, and still less from Antioch. According to Herodian,³ Niger, on learning of the loss of the Cilician Gates, hurried on from Antioch with his army, and the rival forces met at Issus. It is evident from the map that Severus's troops had lost no time after gaining control of the pass.

The evidence of coins may be stated conservatively thus; they show that at some time before November 1,⁴ and one shows that before October 1, 194,⁵ Severus was in control of Cilicia and Syria. How long or short a time is not known. Platnauer's suggestion that the cities which issued coins may have cast in their lot with Severus is incapable of proof. The cities of Syria, which are known to have revolted, were so quickly subdued by Niger that no coins of those revolts, if ever issued, have come down to us.

There are several inscriptions of Arabia giving Severus *Trib. Pot. II, Imp. IIII, Cos. II*, proving that *Imp. IIII*, which designates the victory at Issus, was assumed in 194, and before December 10, when *Trib. Pot. III* began. Now these inscriptions (they are all on milestones) are found on five different roads or widely separate stretches of roads. It is hardly likely that all the road-work they represent was done in just a short time before December 10; it is more reasonable to suppose that the work continued over months. There are about a dozen of these inscriptions known.⁶ Whether the governor, Severianus Maximus, did or did not support Severus before the fall of Niger has nothing to do with this argument. Platnauer's suggestion on the point has no meaning.⁷ The significant point is the existence of *Imp. IIII* on many stones found on several roads.

¹ Platnauer's book p. 89 and note.

² *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 11th edition, vol. 2, p. 758, cols. 1 and 2.

³ Herodian iii, 4, 1 and 2.

⁴ Kubitschek, in his paper mentioned above, gives two coins of Aegae in Cilicia, not far from Issus, and dated in the year Nov. 1, 193-194.

⁵ Syria p. 78; Platnauer's paper pp. 146 and 147.

⁶ P. Thomsen, *Die römischen Meilensteine der Provinzen Syria, Arabia und Palaestina*, Leipzig, 1917, p. 90 and references, and map facing p. 102.

⁷ Platnauer's paper p. 148.

The inscription of Venidius Rufus, governor of Syria Phoenice, which gives Severus the titles *Trib. Pot.*, *Imp. III* (or *IIII*), *Cos. II*, can no longer be allowed the importance which I assigned to it in my earlier study,¹ for the dating of the end of Niger's revolt. It still remains a record of some significance. Platnauer² would undermine its value because of the lack of a number with the *Trib. Pot.* And he finds 'no strangeness in the decision of a governor of Syria (or Syria Phoenice) . . . to remain faithful to Severus' cause.' But, under the conditions then prevailing, this statement can have no meaning. Niger was governor of all Syria at the time he revolted, and certainly he allowed no appointee of Severus to govern while he lived. Hasebroek would emend the inscription to read *Imp. VIII*, and date it in 196.³ Against such a change in its reading is the fact that in the original publication the line containing the title in question reads plainly TRIBPOT IMPIII, with no gap between IMP and the numeral following. Furthermore the names and titles of Severus are those of the first year or two of his reign; in particular *Pius* does not appear among them, a name assumed in 195, nor do the titles *Arabicus* *Adiabenicus*. On the other hand in the two distinct types of inscriptions referring to this governor, and dated in the year 197-198, the names and titles of Severus proper to that time all appear.⁴ The inscription of Rufus then, despite the lacking numeral with the *Trib. Pot.*, properly is dated early in the reign of Severus. A change in the reading preferred by its editors must be made, *Imp. III* to *Imp. IIII*, since Severus did not control in Syria before he assumed the latter title. In fact at least one copy made from the stone showed *Imp. IIII*, and it should be noted that the numeral is at the end of a line where a part might easily be obliterated.⁵ Therefore, while the inscription can give no proof of an early end of Niger's revolt, it is evidence that Severus had divided Syria, and had appointed a governor of Syria Phoenice, the smaller division, in 194, or possibly early in 195.⁶

There is one other inscription of Severus *Imp. IIII*, set up in his honour by the people of Nepet in Etruria, and while he held the titles *Trib. Pot. II* and *Cos. II*.⁷ This inscription cannot offer evidence for a particularly early dating of the battle at Issus; but it, set up in Italy, certainly proves beyond question that the battle took place at least a month before Severus assumed his *Trib. Pot. III*, on December 10, 194.

On May 9, 10, 11 in 194 at Lugdunum, a priesthood of the *Magna*

¹ Syria pp. 79 and 81.

² Platnauer's paper pp. 147 and 148.

³ Hasebroek p. 69.

⁴ Thomsen *op. cit.* nos. 12 and 41; p. 90 and references.

⁵ Jalabert and Mouterde, *Mélanges de la Faculté Orientale* iv (1910), p. 216.

⁶ Syria p. 87. As shown in the first part of this

paper the name *Pius* was assumed before September 17, 195.

⁷ *C.I.L.* xi, 2301 = Dessau 416. A similar inscription, dedicated, as is that of Nepet, to Severus *optimo fortissimo principi*, from Cuicul in Numidia, is published in *L'Année Épig.* 1917-1918, 70. Unfortunately the *Trib. Pot.* numeral is gone from the stone.

Mater offered *ex voto* a *taurobolium* for the safety of the Emperor Severus and of Albinus. The record of it is preserved on an altar.¹ Two other celebrations by the same priesthood are known from inscriptions,² all of different days, and therefore apparently not offered on regular, but on special occasions. One celebration, which took place on May 4 to 7 of 197, is associated by Platnauer³ and Hasebroek⁴ with the presence of Severus at Lugdunum. What special occasion in May, 194, called for a three days' celebration? It cannot have been the presence of Severus or of Albinus. It can hardly have been because of the news of the winning of Asia Minor; for that it is too late. It seems then reasonable to connect it with the final struggle against Niger. And the presence of the expression *ex voto* in the record makes it appear as a celebration held to carry out the terms of a vow after the celebrants had had a favourable fulfilment of their prayer—a prayer for the victory of Severus. If this interpretation were certain, the inscription would be evidence that Severus won his final victory over Niger a month or so before May 9, 194; but in the lack of more definite information as to the possible significance of the inscription, it cannot surely settle the question.

Of all this evidence a most conservative interpretation would allow one to date the battle of Issus between February and October of 194, with the probabilities in favour of a date early, rather than late, in this period. A more definite conclusion is not at present possible; but, as inscriptions of the reign of Severus are being discovered every year, it is quite possible that one dating *Imp. IIII* more precisely will come to light.

¹ *C.I.L.* xiii, 1753.

² *C.I.L.* xiii, 1752 and 1754.

³ Platnauer's book p. 111.

⁴ Hasebroek p. 104.